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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - TRIBUTE TO JOHN PAUL II UN
REPORT: ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY
PARIS - TUESDAY, APRIL 05, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#). TRIBUTE TO JOHN PAUL II
- [2](#). UN REPORT: ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

TRIBUTE TO JOHN PAUL II CONTINUES TO BE TODAY'S OVERWHELMING FRONT PAGE AND EDITORIAL STORY. SEVERAL REPORTS NOTE THAT THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. BUSH WILL ATTEND FRIDAY'S FUNERAL. LE FIGARO TITLES: "THE FIRST U.S. PRESIDENT TO ATTEND A POPE'S FUNERAL." "THE EXCEPTIONAL PRESENCE OF A U.S. PRESIDENT IS PROOF OF THE VERY UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WHICH JOHN PAUL II ESTABLISHED WITH THE U.S., WHICH HE VISITED SEVEN TIMES." IN A SEPARATE STORY TITLED "BACHAR EL-ASSAD, THE UNEXPECTED GUEST," PIERRE PRIER COMMENTS: "THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT, WHO HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, WILL BE STANDING NEXT TO HIS TWO MAIN TORMENTORS, PRESIDENTS BUSH AND CHIRAC. THIS UNEXPECTED GUEST WILL SAVOR THE MOMENT WHEN HE WILL BE THE EQUAL OF HIS POWERFUL ADVERSARIES, DURING THE PLANETARY TRIBUTE TO A MAN WHO HAD VIOLENTLY CONDEMNED THE EMBARGO AND LATER THE WAR IN IRAQ."

TWO DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED EDITORIALS, ONE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO THE OTHER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION, COMMENT ON THE "GLOBAL CITIZEN" (LE FIGARO) AND ON FRANCE'S EXCESS OF IDOLATRY (LIBERATION). THE TWO OPPOSING VIEWS ILLUSTRATE THE DEBATE WHICH HAS FLARED IN FRANCE OVER TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE POPE'S DEATH AND THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO PUT ALL GOVERNMENT BUILDING FLAGS AT HALF-MAST. THIS DEBATE OVER FRANCE'S SECULARISM IS THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE EDITORIAL IN REGIONAL LES DERNIERES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE, WHILE LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE IN ITS EDITORIAL TITLED "A UNIVERSAL EMOTION" CONTENTS THAT THE TRIBUTE IS IN KEEPING WITH THE STATURE OF THE MAN. (SEE PART C)

ON THE OCCASION OF THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO PARIS, LE FIGARO CARRIES A FULL-PAGE INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT KHATAMI, TITLED "IRANIAN PRESIDENT REFUSES TO GIVE UP IRAN'S CIVILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM." "I BELIEVE THAT DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM ARE COMPATIBLE, ON TWO CONDITIONS: FIRST WE MUST NOT LIMIT ISLAM TO A NARROW TALIBAN-STYLE VISION. AND INSTEAD OF REDUCING DEMOCRACY TO ONE VERSION, DEMOCRACY MUST BE ADAPTED TO THE CULTURE AND IDENTITY OF EACH NATION. ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE, OUR NEGOTIATIONS ARE WITH THE EUROPEANS. WE MUST RESPECT THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN PARIS. IRAN WILL TEMPORARILY SUSPEND ITS NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES. BUT WE REFUSE TO STOP OUR CIVILIAN NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES PERMANENTLY."

ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY ARE ALSO THE SUBJECT OF VARIOUS ARTICLES ON THE UN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT IN THE ARAB WORLD. IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION CHRISTOPHE AYAD TITLES HIS ARTICLE: "ONE ELECTION DOES NOT AN ARAB SPRING MAKE." (SEE PART C)

THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PRESS REPORTS THAT "WASHINGTON IS READY TO POSTPONE ITS ULTIMATUM ON SUBSIDIES TO BOEING AND AIRBUS." (LE FIGARO ECONOMIE) DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE ZEOLICK IS QUOTED.

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

TRIBUTE TO JOHN PAUL II

"A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD"

MICHEL SCHIFRES IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (04/05): "WE ARE ASTONISHED BY THE IMPACT OF JOHN POPE'S DEATH AROUND THE WORLD. AN IMPACT WHICH SERVES TO ILLUSTRATE THE AURA OF A UNIVERSAL MAN. OTHER DEATHS IN THE PAST HAVE ELICITED SIMILAR POPULAR FERVOR: THE DEATH OF JOHN F. KENNEDY, GANDHI. BUT THESE DID NOT HAVE THE SAME UNIVERSAL NATURE. IN A SENSE WE MUST GO BACK TO THE TRAGEDY OF THE TWIN TOWERS ON 9/11 TO FIND A COMPARABLE EMOTION. ALL CONTINENTS WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE OR RELIGION ARE EXPRESSING THE SAME COMPASSION AND THE SAME SADNESS FOR THE PASSING OF A MAN WHO WAS THE LEADER OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND AN ICON FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD."

"IDOLATRY"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (04/05): "OUR FAITH IN REASON NEEDS TO BE STRONG IN ORDER NOT TO BE OVERWHELMED BY THE WAVES OF HOLY WATER AND IDOLATRY INUNDATING US. COMPASSION FOR THE MAN, TOLERANCE FOR ALL RELIGIONS AND THE FACT THAT THIS POPE HAS PLAYED A POLITICAL ROLE IS NOT ENOUGH TO KEEP US FROM SHUDDERING AT THIS UNIVERSAL TRIBUTE AND AT THE STIFLING OF ANY CRITICISM OF HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS, WHICH WERE FAR FROM PERFECT. JOHN PAUL II WAS A ULTRACONSERVATIVE WHOSE USE OF THE RELIGIOUS STICK IS EMBLEMATIC OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM WHICH PLAGUES HUMANITY."

"COMMUNICATION AND GLOBALIZATION"

JEAN-CLAUDE KIEFER IN REGIONAL LES DERNIERES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE (04/05): "THIS `POLICY OF COMMUNICATION' COMPLETELY BREAKS WITH THE TRADITIONAL CAUTION OF THE VATICAN AND PUTS RELIGION IN TUNE WITH GLOBALIZATION. WORLD LEADERS HAVE UNDERSTOOD (SUCH MEDIA ATTENTION): CATHOLIC OR NOT, THEY WILL ALMOST ALL ATTEND THE FUNERAL ON FRIDAY. AMONG THEM, GEORGE W. BUSH, THE VERY CHRISTIAN AMERICAN PRESIDENT WHOM THE POPE BROUGHT UP SHORT BY PUBLICLY CONDEMNING THE WAR IN IRAQ. COMPARED TO THE DIMENSIONS TAKEN ON BY THE DEATH OF THE POPE, CERTAIN QUARRELS SEEM RIDICULOUS. SOME, IN FRANCE, COMPLAIN BECAUSE THE SECULAR REPUBLIC HAS LOWERED ITS FLAGS FOR A RELIGIOUS LEADER (WHO IS ALSO A HEAD OF STATE)! THEY FORGET THAT JEAN PAUL II DID MORE FOR THE IMAGE OF FRANCE, WHEN FOLLOWED BY TELEVISION DURING HIS VISITS, THAN ALL THEIR (SECULAR) SPEECHES COMBINED. AND THEY FORGET THE VERY CATHOLIC BURIALS OF OUR DECEASED PRESIDENTS OF OUR VERY SECULAR REPUBLIC."

"A UNIVERSAL EMOTION"

LEFT-OF-CENTER LE MONDE IN ITS EDITORIAL (04/05): "A GLOBAL EMOTION IS TODAY'S RESPONSE TO THE PASSING OF JOHN PAUL II. WORLDWIDE COVERAGE HAS IN A SENSE TEMPORARILY ERASED THE `SHOCK BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS.' FEW EXPERTS COULD HAVE PREDICTED THE COVERAGE WHICH AL-JAZZIRA AND AL-ARABIYA HAVE DEVOTED TO THE STORY. THE MEDIA IS FASCINATED WITH THIS FIGURE WHO SOON BECAME THE ICON OF A GLOBAL PEOPLE IN SEARCH OF REFERENCES AND IN SEARCH OF A FATHER FIGURE. JOHN PAUL II WAS AN EMINENTLY POLITICAL POPE WHO SOUGHT TO GO BEYOND THE BORDERS OF RELIGION. THE WORLD TODAY IS PAYING HIM A UNIVERSAL TRIBUTE."

UN REPORT: ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

"ONE ELECTION DOES NOT AN ARAB SPRING MAKE."

CHRISTOPHE AYAD IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (04/05): "THE ARAB WORLD IS SUFFERING FROM A LACK OF DEMOCRACY. AND THIS TIME IT IS THE UN WHICH IS SAYING IT, NOT PRESIDENT BUSH AND HIS NEO-CONS WHO CAN TAKE CREDIT FOR THE ELECTIONS IN IRAQ. THE THIRD UN REPORT ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB WORLD DRAWS A DAMNING PICTURE OF THE STATE OF POLITICAL LIBERTIES, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN THE ARAB WORLD." LEACH